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Tap on SCLC Phones Retained by Hoover, Rev. Abernathy Says

From Our Wire Services

ATLANTA, Aug. 11.—The president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference charged Tuesday that the FBI still is tapping phones of officials in the civil rights organization.

The Rev. Ralph David Abernathy responded to questions about a Time magazine story which said FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover confronted the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with wiretaps disclosing alleged extramarital activities.

Mr. Abernathy was asked at a news conference if the FBI was continuing to tap SCLC phone conversations.

"Yes," he replied, "not only of SCLC officials but just about anyone who stands up for justice in this country today."

NEW BOOK ON KING

Asked how he could tell the phones were tapped, Mr. Abernathy replied:

"You just pick up the telephone. You don't have to be a Philadelphia lawyer to know that someone is listening."

He said he had heard other conversations, strange noises, and even sounds which could be police calls over both his office and home telephones.

The Time story was about a new book on Dr. King, "The King God Didn't Save," by John Williams. Dr. King preceded Mr. Abernathy as SCLC president.

Time said Hoover met with Dr. King in 1964, "lectured" him about his morals and suggested he tone down his criticism of the FBI.

MRS. MARTIN L. KING
. . . recollection differs

Dr. King's widow said the Time story "does not correspond" with what her husband told her.

Mr. Abernathy, the Rev. Andrew Young and the Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy also challenged the article. They issued a statement saying:

"All three of us were present during the entire discussion, and at no point did Mr. Hoover lecture Dr. King or even comment on his personal life . . . Time magazine discredits itself in seeking to throw mud on a man admired and loved by millions, black and white. It discredits itself in stooping to sensationalism through fiction and irresponsibility."

A spokesman for Time, commenting on the statements, said:

"A careful reading of Time's article should make quite clear the magazine's admiration for Dr. King's work—for example, the observations that Dr. King's leadership brought conscience and cohesion to the cause of black equality, and that he was the catalyst in the formation of a truly national civil rights movement.

'As for the facts in the article, Time stands by its reporting."

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